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Research article

Evaluation of the Current State of Historical City Center of Erzurum and Production of Related Maps

Hilal TURGUT

Artvin Çoruh University Forestry Faculty Department of Landscape Architecture

Pervin YEŞİL

General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works

Ömer ATABEYOĞLU*, Hasan YILMAZ

Ataturk University, Faculty of Architecture and Design Department of Landscape Architecture

ABSTRACT

Historical cities are cultural heritages which mankind should preserve, keep alive, experience and hand on future generations. Situated in the eastern part of Turkey within an area with a high altitude, Erzurum city was the home of a lot of civilizations in the past and it is also a city with geopolitical significance; therefore, with these features, it houses several important historical monuments and cultural values. In this study, the current state analysis was done based on protection regions and the borders of protection focused public improvement plans. The study aimed at presenting the current state of historical city texture by quantifying and evaluating the monumental structures of the historical city core, the samples of civilian architecture and cultural features. Although the urban tissue has been in a deterioration process through history due to the natural disasters, battles, and recent distorted and unplanned urbanisation, it still shelters a considerable amount of values. From this point of view, it may be concluded that historical remains and structures can be transferred to the next generations in conservation and use balance.

Key words; Erzurum, historical city, sustainability

Erzurum Tarihi Kent Merkezinin Mevcut Durum Analizi ve Haritalarının Oluşturulması

ÖZET

Tarihi kentler, tüm insanlığın koruması, yaşatması, yaşaması ve gelecek nesillere aktarması gereken kültürel miraslardır. Türkiye'nin doğusunda ve en yüksek rakımlı bölgesinde yer alan Erzurum kenti, geçmişinde pek çok medeniyete ev sahipliği yapmış ve jeopolitik öneme sahip bir kent olup, bu özellikleriyle çok sayıda, önemli tarihi yapıları ve zengin bir kültürü barındırmaktadır. Çalışmada, koruma amaçlı imar planı sınırları ve koruma bölgeleri temel alınarak kentsel dokuya ilişkin mevcut durum analizi yapılmıştır. Çalışmada, tarihi kent çekirdeğinin anıtsal yapıları, sivil mimarlık örnekleri ve kültürel özellikleri değerlendirilerek sayısallaştırmak ve tarihi kent dokusunun bugünkü durumunu ortaya koymak amaçlanmıştır. Tarihi kent dokusunun geçmişe kıyasla büyük ölçüde tahrip görmüş olmasına karşın, hala önemli ölçüde değeri barındırdığı, ancak bugüne ulaşabilmiş eserlerin koruma ve kullanma dengesi içerisinde gelecek nesillere aktarımının sağlanabileceği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler; Erzurum, tarihi kent, sürdürülebilirlik

INTRODUCTION

The entire values which carry the traces of the past to present time and need handing on future generations and preserving carefully make up our cultural heritages. These values can disappear easily unless they are given enough importance and once they disappear, it is not possible to regain them. The historical city texture means an important component of that society's cultural heritage. With every piece

destroyed and demolished, the cultural heritage of people is destroyed more and therefore the past is forgotten quickly and the future becomes uncertain (Kökten, 1996).

Cities from the oldest known periods of humanity to present time have been places developing as determined by the features of the time, and social, economical and cultural structures of the societies living in that period.

As a result of the moral faith to these settlements, people mostly preferred renewing these areas to migrating or opening new places to live in. With new additions to the areas belonging to previous periods, these places gained functionality to match the requirements of the present. Today, the historical domain, both inside and out of the city, has either been deserted or it has fallen into ruins as a consequence of newly opened settlements which are intended to match changing demands as a result of the developing technology (Develioğlu, 1991).

It is the site itself that urban landscape planning attempts take into consideration as a base. These attempts do not concentrate on the individual masses, but they evaluate them related with their proximities. This approach is the principle of achieving the unity in planning attempts. Historical urban tissues should be evaluated with their surroundings; harmony in the pattern of main axis and secondary streets; urban tissue and designing works; mass open space characteristics and landscape planning and designing principles should be provided and these issues should be considered by local administrations

The aim of this study is to manifest the existence of damage resulting from the rapid destruction of historical places especially that of historical street textures and traditional Erzurum Houses, which have historical value and also demonstrate the picture of destruction of a period which is not only important for Turkish World but also critical for all humanity. Erzurum city, where even a stone is a bridge between the past and future, was an important stop of Silkway. It maintained its existence along history during Byzantium, Saltuks, Seljuks and Ottoman periods respectively as a living city of culture.

In this study, the aim is to present the current state of the region based on the Application Conditions of protection focused public

improvements plan of Erzurum Üç Kümbetler and the Castle Surroundings arranged together with protection focused public improvements plan with date 6.8.1986.

It was approved by the decision of Cultural and Natural Wealth Protection Board of Erzurum with date 17.12.1993 and no 601. The site is within the boundaries of 1st and 3rd archeological and protected urban sites.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Material

Erzurum city is in the northeast of East Anatolian Region. It is 25.066 km². It is located between 40° 15' and 42° 35' east longitudes and 40° 57' and 39° 10' north latitudes (Figure 1). According to the observations of 70 years, the coldest month average is -8.6 °C, and the hottest month average is 19.6 °C. The lowest temperature, -36 °C, was measured in January and the highest temperature, 35 °C, was measured in July. Annual rainfall is 453 mm. The number of days with snowfall is 50 and the duration of snow cover is 114 days (Anonymous, 2007). Because the city, with a population of 348,000 people, is located at a high elevation (1959m), winter tourism sector is rapidly improving. Although agriculture is the main source of living, the rapid development of winter tourism in the city which is located on a quite high altitude (1959 m) has made tourism a leading sector. As the city will host 2011 Universiade Winter Olympic Games, it is on a rapid change trend and this process has made important contributions to the city perspective. Along with winter tourism, health and congress tourisms also occupy a significant place.

The material of the study consists of all historical monuments, samples of civilian architecture and social structures within the boundaries of Erzurum Protected Urban Area. This area also forms the core of historical city.

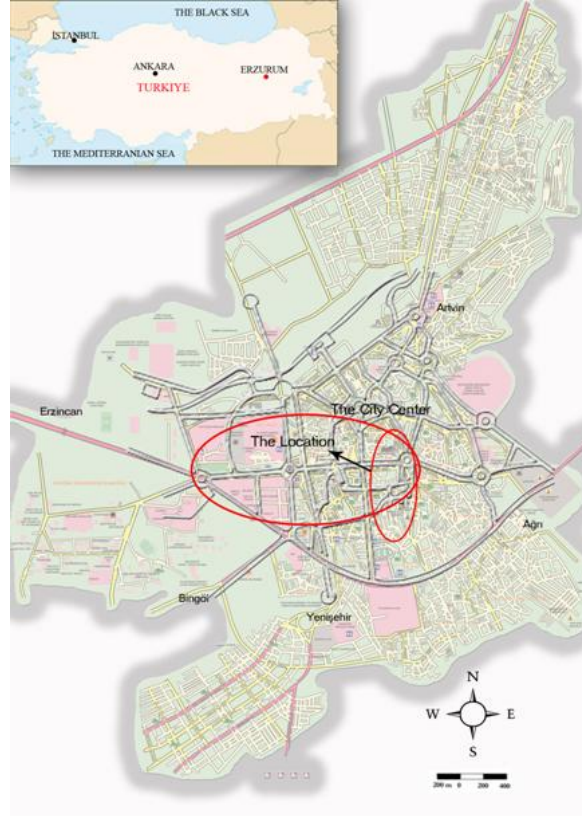


Figure 1.The Location of Study Area

Method

The study is an original one. All the historical monuments, civilian architectural samples, urban structures and historical remnants were determined by visiting the area during two years in 2006 and 2007 considering the public improvements plan, and then they were put on the agenda for evaluation for their current state. During the study, all the components within the study area were photographed. The residents were interviewed individually. The documents, maps and required information were obtained from local governments. By investigating the authenticity of local stories, accurate judgments were passed on. In the study, 'Protection Focused Public Improvements Plan', 'Application Report of Public Improvements Plan' and 'Cultural and Natural Wealth Inventory', which were obtained from the Cultural and Natural Wealth Protection Directory, were used.

The second phase of the study consists of office studies. In this phase, the literature, information, documents, maps and photos compiled were

quantified by analyzing them in the computer medium. Photoshop 8.0 software was used to prepare visual material.

According to the law 5226, which was put into effect following its publication in Official Gazette on 27 July, 2004, and law 2863 on Protecting the Cultural and Natural Heritages, "Protection Focused Public Improvements Plan" was defined in the following way: in the protected sites determined in accordance with the law, with the aim of preserving the cultural and natural heritages regarding the sustainability principle, based on the field investigation consisting of archeological, historical, natural, architectural, demographical, cultural, socio-economical, ownership and construction data; it is a plan on a scale required by the application of public improvements plan in accordance with planning decisions, attitudes, planning notes and endorsement reports prepared to include construction limitations, refining and renewing field and projects, open field system, pedestrian

circulation and vehicle transportation on the present maps (Anonymous, 2004).

FINDINGS

1st and 3rd degree Protected Urban Sites within the boundaries of city texture were examined. The present state map created according to the data is given in Figure 2. According to the principle decision with number 658 on the protection and handling conditions of archeological sites given by the Cultural and Natural Heritages Protection Upper Board of the Ministry of Culture in 1999; “The principle decision with number 594 and date 14.7.1998 on

the protection and handling conditions of archeological sites was rearranged in the following way considering the problems arising in the application, issues contradicting the regulations and the decision of Council of State with number 1997/4875, date 11.11.1997 and base 1996/3313. Accordingly, protected urban sites, together with archeological sites, are defined as areas sharing the urban texture, which involve real cultural heritages that need protecting as defined in the 6th entry of the law 2863” (Özden, 2006).

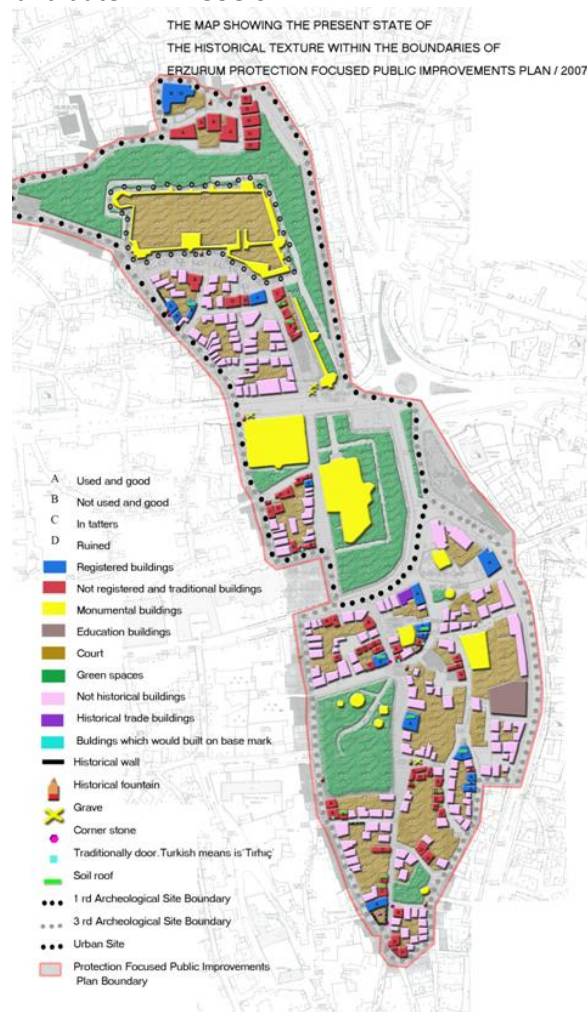


Figure 2. The map showing the present state of the historical texture within the boundaries of Erzurum Protection Focused Public Improvements Plan (Quantified regarding the 1986 public improvements plan) (Original, 2007).

1st Degree Archeological Site: These are under protection areas. They can only be used for scientific purposes. Inner Castle is the 1st degree archeological site. Excavations

still continue in this area. There is a fountain, a masjid and a clock tower inside the castle, which has eight towers and is surrounded by walls. Masjids are places for

praying and they are smaller than mosques. They were important urban places in the social structure during the times they belonged to. Masjids which were built using stones have historical value and today they are protected carefully. The top of the clock tower, which was built in Saltuks times, had collapsed. This part was later restored in 19th century with wooden material in baroque style and a clock was mounted here. The castle fountain next to the walls outside the

castle has a stone structure. Its water is not running nowadays (Figure 3).

Fountains were important structures in the urban texture. They were important and inseparable parts of Turkish-Islamic culture. At times when water was a great need as usual and difficult to reach, building fountains was considered to be a great charity, so the rich of the time had fountains built wherever possible (Bulut and Atabeyoğlu, 2007).



Figure 3.a) Clock Tower (Original, 2006) b) Castle Towers (Original, 2006)

3rd Degree Archeological Site: These are the sites which can be restored regarding the protection and handling decisions. This study area includes social and civilian architectural structures as seen in figure 1. It covers a wide area including the Castle, Çifte Minare and Ulucami.

The Social Structures inside the 3rd Degree Archeological Site:

Ulucami: It is one of the oldest mosques in Erzurum. It was built by Saltuks in 1179 (Anonymous, 2005). Although the mosque and its minaret have been damaged several times along the history, they have been restored in different periods and succeeded to stand till present time (Figure 4).



Figure 4.The west side of Ulucami (Original, 2006)

The Çifte Minare Madrasa, which was the biggest madrasa of Anatolia, is the most important representatives of the historical monuments in the study area. Madrasa is the name given to educational institutions in the old Turkish history where secondary and higher education were taken. Çifte Minare Madrasa, which has become the symbol of Erzurum, is considered to have been built in

the late 13th century as it does not have an epigraph. It is one of the spectacular monuments of stone engraving. It has two multi-sliced cylindrical minarets rising at both sides of the main entrance. The minarets were decorated with glazed or non-glazed bricks and the bases were decorated with mosaics (Figure 5).

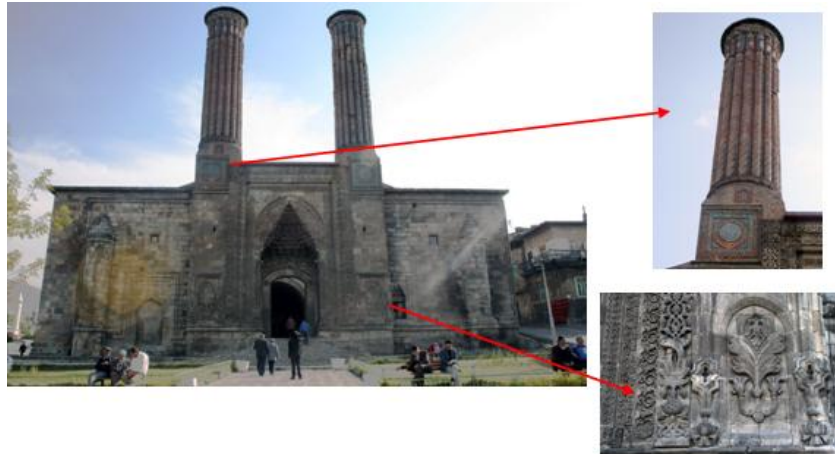


Figure 5. Çifte Minare Madrasa and detailed views (Original, 2006)

There are 3 graves in the 3rd degree archeological site. Although it is not known why these graves are here or who they belong to, they have reached our time and are still protected due to the convention that Turkish cities must be protected and they

must be handed on future generations as a historical heritage (Figure 6). There are three fountains and a dome among the social structures in this area. The domes, which are important structures of trimmed stone works, are tombs.



Figure 6. a) A view from the grave by the road in Cumhuriyet Street (Original, 2006) b) Fountain sample (Original, 2006)

There were big corner stones almost at every corner of the houses in the old Erzurum city texture (Figure 7). These stones were used to prevent the phaetons

and carriages from hitting the house walls while they were turning the corners as there did not use to be pavements then. Now there is only one sample of these stones in

the 3rd degree archeological site as the restorations. texture has decayed because of the street



Figure 7. The corner stone at the corner of a historical house (Original,2006)

The Samples of Civilian Architecture

The samples of civilian architecture involve houses. Regarding the registration, the houses in the area can be evaluated in the following way:

- a) Registered traditional houses
- b) Unregistered traditional houses

The houses which are determined to have historical and aesthetical value and need absolute protection by the Cultural and

Natural Heritages Protection Board are in the scope of registered houses. There are 6 registered houses in the 3rd degree archeological site: 3 of them are employed and in healthy condition; and the rest 3 are not employed but in healthy condition. There are also 27 unregistered traditional houses: 8 of them are employed and in healthy condition; 5 of them are not employed but in healthy condition; 6 of them are damaged; and 8 of them collapsed (Figure 8).

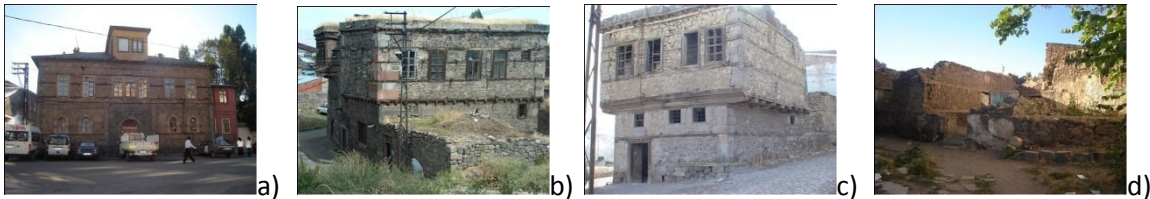


Figure 8. a) A sample of house employed and in healthy condition (Original, 2006) b) A sample of house not employed but in healthy condition (Original, 2006) c) A sample of damaged house (Original, 2006) d) A sample of collapsed house (Original, 2006).

One of the most important details of traditional architecture of Erzurum houses is earthen roofs which constitute simple samples of extensive roof gardens and are a composition of floor covers and grass (Figure 9). There are 3 earthen roofs in the study area. Another important detail is the gates of the houses and gardens. The double winged doors, which are the most valuable elements of Erzurum houses, have two parts. On each part, there is a door knob

made of two different metals and these knobs have matching beds made of metal. In addition to these main entrance doors, some houses whose main entrance door open directly to street have a second door inside. These structures growing out of the cage style constructed doors are traditionally called as “tırhiç”. They replace the function of main entrance doors which are open along the day. These second doors prevent the inside of the house from being seen and

they do not let street animals in. They are also structures which make the street

perspective distinctive (Figure 10).



Figure 10. A sample of earthen roof (Original, 2006) and a sample of tırhiç (Original, 2006)

Protected urban site covers the areas which show urban and local qualifications, physical features with respect to their architectural and historical peculiarities, and textural integrity. They also reflect the socio-economical and socio-cultural formation of the time and they maintain these features together. This protected site forms the widest borders of the study area and covers all other protected areas. It involves 1st and 3rd degree protected sites together with 3 districts.

a) Samples of civilian architecture

The data in the site: In addition to historical, social and civilian architectural samples within the 1st and 3rd degree archeological sites, there are a number of registered and unregistered houses: 11 of them are registered, 10 of which are in healthy condition and can be used; 42 of them are unregistered, 13 of which are in healthy condition and can be used; 1 of which is in healthy condition but not employed; 5 of which are damaged; and 23 of which are destroyed.

b) Social structures

There is a grave, a bath, mosques, domes and fountains in the study area, which are suitable for traditional street texture. There is only one bath sample standing in the area. Baths have an important place in Turkish culture. They have generally been built for providing income for charities and mosques and they have met bathing need of the people for centuries. The Saray Bath in the study area was restored a short time ago and it was reopened for bathing. There are also 6 domes bringing both aesthetics and cultural value in the study area. The octagonal dome, which is the biggest one among the domes known as “Üç Kümbetler” belongs to 12th century Saltuks period and the rest 2 belong to 14th century. Near them is another small one with a square structure belonging to the same century. Apart from “Üç Kümbetler”, there are also two others called as ‘Rabia Hatun Kümbet’ and ‘Mehdi Abbas Kümbet’, which are thought to belong to early 14th century (Figure 11). In addition to these structures, there are 2 mosques, 5 fountains and a grave.

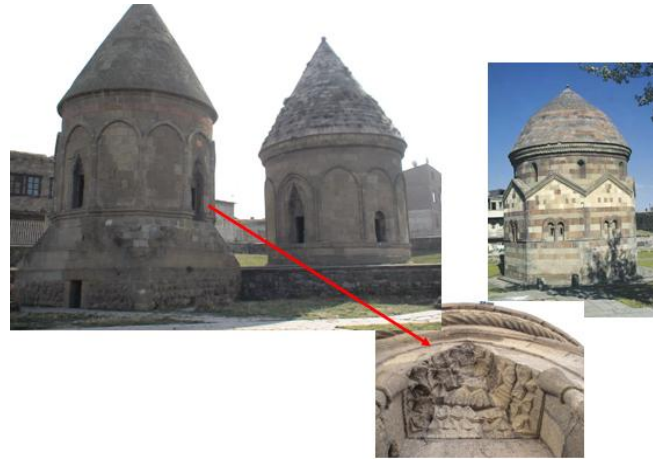


Figure 11. General and detailed views from Üç Kümbetler (Original,2006)

All these historical and architectural structures in combination form the traditional Erzurum Street. According to the scene emerging from remnants left behind the traditional street texture, the streets were situated in the north-south direction parallel to the topographic structure of the city. The streets, 5 meters wide in average, were covered with natural stone. Along the stone layer, there were some low trimmed stones in the middle parallel to the street for discharging water. There were circuitous and

dead end streets reflecting Ottoman street structure. There were also high garden walls, most of which were destroyed, and some places providing privacy. There used to be birch and maple trees and plants running over the garden walls which provided a beautiful perspective along the history for the people walking by but such sceneries are rarely met nowadays. Thin sharpened stones were used to build big garden walls and girders were used to fasten them (Figure 12.)



Figure 12. a) A sample of traditional garden (Original, 2006) b) A sample of street layer (Original, 2006)

During the study, it was observed that the protected urban site, whose traditional street texture and houses used to exist a few years ago, was partly damaged and it

disappeared completely in some places. Table 1 presents the count of all urban accessories and samples of civilian architectural structures within the area.

Table 1. The current state inventory of Erzurum city protected area in 2007

			Registered				Traditional				Urban Area Utilizations						Urban Accessories			
			A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	Mosque	Bath	Grave	Dome	Madrasa	Castle	Fountain	Corner stone	Tırhıç	Garden Wall
Urban Site	3 rd Degree Archeological Site	1 st Degree Archeological Site	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
		Others	3	3	-	-	8	5	8	6	1	-	3	1	-	-	3	1	1	-
	Others	10	-	1	-	14	1	4	18	2	1	1	6	1	-	4	3	4	-	
	Others																			
	Others																			
Total			13	3	1	-	21	6	11	31	3	1	4	7	1	1	8	4	5	-

A: In Healthy Condition / Employed

B: In Healthy Condition / Not employed

C: Damaged

D: Completely destroyed

CONCLUSION

Appropriate planning studies are required so that immovable cultural heritages can be preserved ideally. The international Venice Regulation generated in 1964 states that monuments are the most valuable witnesses of the past, that they should be considered as common heritages and that it is societies' duty to preserve them (Yazgan and Erdoğan, 1992).

Cities have experienced periods of development, change, decay and sometimes destruction along the history. City fictions interact with the responsibility of people parallel to their life styles in this period. Within this interaction, life styles emerge as the main factor during the phases when city fiction is formed through time and it is directed. Cities are living organisms. Their development and enlargement are their definitive features. As the social and economic levels in the cities have been changing throughout the historical process, architectural and urban formations, which are the concrete expressions of these changes, also differ. Identity of the cities are renovated and shaped by these changes. Main target of the planners and local administrators should be to preserve and transfer these structures to next generations (Yamaçlı, 1997; İpekoğlu, B., 2006).

How did such a rapid destruction happen in such a short time? In fact, it is not so difficult to answer this. The core of city history is in the center of Erzurum city and it has a quite high profitability. Therefore, the situation stems from the fact that the municipality has an inclination to demolish these historical places and build multi-flatted offices and apartment blocks which will bring a considerable amount of income. In addition, estate owners support this objective. So, all these result in mistreatment and destruction.

As it is stated in the findings, the samples of civilian architecture in the study area are basically divided into two groups. The first of these are the registered civilian architectural monuments. These are registered in an inventory by Cultural and Natural Heritages Protection Board and they are under protection.

However, this protection protocol has such severe principles that it does not let the owners make any restorations in the buildings and it also exhibits obligations on the handling of the buildings. As a result, owners face difficulties as they cannot restore or fix the damages in the buildings, so they leave their property or they attempt to destroy the buildings secretly.

Working fields of the occupational branch of landscape architecture range from private land use to semi-public and public ones. Streets, squares, civil architecture examples in historical cities and monumental structures are indispensable parts of a city and outdoor land use (Çelik 2004).

Erzurum city has an extremely rich historical texture and culture with its civilian architectural monuments. However, in the course of time, as the historical city core has stayed in the city center, it has increased the city pressure on the historical texture to a great extent. Even though the present state of the historical texture, when compared to its past, is seen so simple and worthless, it accommodates considerable amount of historical structures, understanding and culture when the present state, today's conditions and modern city conception are taken in to account.

What should be done from now on is to prevent this heritage from being destroyed and decrease the destruction to the least level possible in a required protection and utilization. Because these works are cultural heritages, which do not only reflect a local culture but also let the culture of several civilizations reach today.

Issues needing great considerations in the planning attempts are the life quality in the historical sites, resident garden yards, urban culture, construction materials, land-use in open green spaces, and their reflections today. Handling these architectural works and buildings of historical value by protecting them will both have them live and make the city a distinguished place with respect to tourism.

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